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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 31 December 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the conclusions of the Nineteenth Conference of the Heads of State and Government of France and Africa, held in Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 1996.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 12, 71, 98 and 112, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gaitan R. OUEDRAOGO

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Annex I

Final Declaration issued at the close of the Nineteenth Conference of the Heads of State, Government and Delegation of France and Africa, held in Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 1996

The heads of State, Government and Delegation of France and Africa, meeting in Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 1996, exchanged views on the main developments taking place in Africa and the world.

They endeavoured to strengthen the links between good governance and development.

To this end, they solemnly reaffirmed that:

- Economic development can be viable only if it is part of a long-term vision within the framework of a society-based project reflecting collective choices. This entails the existence of mechanisms and capacities for ensuring coherence between essential short-term economic reforms and medium- and long-term development policies;

- The ultimate goal of development is to build a social order that is based on a vision of justice and peace and accepted by the majority, respects distinctive characteristics and is capable of enabling everyone to secure his well-being and contribute to the collective welfare;

- In order to be sustainable, development must be rooted in a constitutional state and be achieved through efficient administration ensuring the sound management of public affairs and making it possible to achieve the collective welfare;

- The State, while not the sole actor in this development process, bears the primary responsibility for it.

Welcoming the progress already achieved along these lines, the heads of State, Government and delegation undertake to continue to:

- Strive towards the adaptation of legal norms ensuring respect for human rights;

- Ensure respect for these norms by elected representatives, government officials, and the citizens themselves;

- Ensure the equality of all before the law and guarantee the possibility of means of recourse against decisions by government officials;

- Take the necessary legal and budgetary measures to ensure the independence of the judicial system;

- Ensure the enforcement of court rulings, including those that involve the responsibility of the State;

- Ensure the effective subordination of armed forces and security forces to the constitutional order;

- Guarantee freedom of the press;

- Ensure greater representation of women in decision-making bodies.

The heads of State, Government and delegation also underscored the importance of the following principles:

- The continuation of the efforts made to adapt human resources training and the number of civil service personnel to the needs and resources of the State;

- Implementation of a budgetary policy reflecting the priority given to establishing democratic institutions and maintaining social development programmes, and aimed at limiting military expenditures;

- Respect for the principles of transparency and accountability at all levels of the State;

- Creation of an environment conducive to the development of economic activity and investment. In this respect, they welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty on the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa, an exemplary instrument for regional integration;

- Development of a strong policy favouring the private sector and private enterprise in both the formal and informal sectors.

The heads of State, Government and delegations reaffirmed their determination to work together to achieve stability and security in Africa by supporting ongoing processes aimed at providing Africa with the mechanisms necessary for crisis prevention and peacekeeping.

They reaffirmed their support for mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts, particularly those of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as well as the use of subregional bodies designed to ensure better crisis prevention and improved coordination of national efforts under the auspices of the United Nations.

The heads of State, Government and delegation noted with interest the statement by His Excellency Mr. Henri Konan Bédié, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, concerning the Félix Houphouet Boigny Prize for Promoting Peace.

In view of the Prize's prestige and the tribute paid to the work of the late President Félix Houphouet Boigny, the Conference reaffirmed its full support for this distinguished award.

They also appealed to all of Africa's partners to continue to heed the needs of Africa in the areas that concerned it directly and to provide it with adequate assistance in order to support its development efforts.

The heads of State, Government and delegation also affirmed their commitment in support of efforts aimed at mine clearance and the elimination of anti-personnel mines.

They condemned the use of children as soldiers and the criminals that engage in that practice.

In order, in particular, to support efforts already made and those to be agreed upon in the future with regard to the various aforementioned objectives, the heads of State, Government and delegation reaffirmed the need for developed countries to show a greater solidarity with developing countries.

They expressed satisfaction at the Special Initiative on Africa initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the proposal to undertake a new global partnership for development made by the group of the seven major industrialized countries at their last summit meeting in Lyons.

The heads of State, Government and delegation stressed that, by deciding not to call into question the principle of official development aid, the summit meeting of the group of the seven major industrialized countries in Lyons renewed the vision of the relationship among development partners based on common interest.

They noted that the summit meeting affirmed the determination of the developed countries and multilateral institutions to improve further the modalities for settling the debts of the poorest countries and they emphasized the need to give concrete expression to that determination as soon as possible. In this respect, the debt owed to members of the Paris Club should be dealt with in a more favourable manner.

Furthermore, the heads of State, Government and delegation expressed satisfaction with the commitment undertaken at Lyons by the most developed countries to extend for as long as necessary the reinforced Structural Adjustment Facility of the Bretton Woods institutions.

They noted the intention of the group of the seven major industrialized countries to make a particular effort on behalf of sub-Saharan Africa and focus assistance on the poorest countries that have limited access to capital markets. Nevertheless, they expressed the wish that that should not penalize the countries whose efforts had enabled them to improve their economic and financial situation.

The heads of State, Government and delegation agreed on a follow-up meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Paris in December 1997. That meeting will determine the date for the Twentieth Conference, to be held in France in 1998.

The heads of State, Government and delegation expressed satisfaction at the quality of their dialogue and the atmosphere of friendship and trust that prevailed during the Conference.

Lastly, the heads of State, Government and delegation expressed their sincerest appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso, and to the Government and people of Burkina Faso for the warmth and quality of the reception given to them and their delegations and for all the consideration showed to them during their stay in Ouagadougou.

Annex II

Declaration on the situation in the Great Lakes region issued at the close of the Nineteenth Conference of the heads of State, Government and delegation of France and Africa, held in Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 1996

The heads of State, Government and delegation of France and Africa, meeting in Ouagadougou from 4 to 6 December 1996, express their grave concern about the situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly:

I. IN EASTERN ZAIRE

Deeply concerned about the humanitarian consequences of this situation and the difficulties encountered by international organizations in providing assistance to those who require it, emphasize the urgent need, in such a situation, to ensure that the aid is made available where necessary;

Recall the statement made by the countries of the region in Nairobi on 5 November 1996, the communiqué issued at the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, held at the level of Ministers in Addis Ababa on 11 November 1996, and Security Council resolutions 1078 (1996) and 1080 (1996);

Welcome the efforts already made by OAU, the Special Envoy of the European Union, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations Security Council and numerous States, particularly African ones;

Reaffirm their respect for the inviolability of borders and, in particular, the need for all States to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region;

Urge the United Nations and OAU to take all possible steps to deploy the international force in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1078 (1996) and 1080 (1996);

Request all States to halt all violence and initiate a process of dialogue and negotiation;

Underscore the urgent need to address, as a whole, the problems of the Great Lakes region, which are interconnected;

Reaffirm the need to hold an international conference on peace, security and stability in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and OAU in order to find a way to bring about a comprehensive and lasting solution to the problems in the region. The conference should lead to the conclusion of a "pact for stability in the Great Lakes region of Africa".

II. IN BURUNDI

The heads of State, Government and delegation noted the declaration of the summit meeting of heads of State and Government of the countries members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held on 2 and 3 December 1996 in Brazzaville, the Congo.

The heads of State, Government and delegation encourage the countries of the Great Lakes region, in consultation with other countries, to continue their efforts to assist Burundi in making progress towards a national dialogue.

In this respect, they call upon the parties to the conflict in Burundi to initiate a dialogue immediately and urge the countries of the region to take appropriate measures concerning the embargo in order to alleviate the suffering of the population.

Reservation

- Rwanda

Appendix

Aware of the fact that Africa is one of the continents most seriously affected by the spread of anti-personnel land-mines and that more than 20 African countries are direct victims of it, the heads of State, Government and delegation stated their profound concern at the fact that those mines kill or mutilate hundreds of persons every week, particularly children, impede economic development and reconstruction, and hinder the repatriation of refugees and the return of displaced persons to their homes within their countries.

They expressed satisfaction at the assistance programmes which facilitate mine-clearance operations and make it possible to provide humanitarian support to the victims of anti-personnel land-mines. They pledge their cooperation in carrying out those operations.

They welcomed the adoption on 3 May 1996 of the strengthened Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices, annexed to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and they expressed their determination to take the necessary steps to accede to it without delay.

The heads of State, Government and delegation committed themselves to the goal of achieving the total and general elimination of anti-personnel mines.

They expressed the conviction that a legally binding and verifiable international agreement on the complete and comprehensive prohibition of anti-personnel mines would substantially reduce the suffering of civilians and combatants and promote security for all.

They will actively contribute to the negotiation of such an international agreement. In that regard, they welcomed the moratoriums, prohibitions and restrictions already adopted by a number of countries on the production, use and export of anti-personnel land-mines, as well as the unilateral reduction of arsenals.